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ABSTRACT

This exploration of gender and test fairness first considers ways in which women and men sometimes differ in test performance, and then examines some of the aspects of why they differ, focusing on aspects that have implications for the design of fair tests. The first chapter introduces the context of the topic, the nature of test fairness, and the main features of this study. Chapter 2 examines recent research on gender differences in test performance to see what data and analyses would be useful in considering the entire issue. Chapter 3, "Test Performance," presents data on male and female performance on widely used current tests. Chapter 4 reports data on grades and other measures of interest and accomplishment among young women and men. Data in Chapter 4 illustrate that achievement is broader than test performance, and they provide a context for better understanding observed patterns in test performance. Beginning with Chapter 5, the discussion shifts to test fairness issues and implications of gender differences noted in the preceding chapters. Chapter 6, "Fairness Issues in Test Development and Administration," deals with the actual creation of a test, and Chapter 7, "Fairness Issues in Test Design and Use," considers its use. Chapter 8 contains a summary of findings on gender difference and similarity as well as fairness issues. Overall, the volume demonstrates that designing a test and justifying its use means resolving complex issues of fairness within constraints imposed by circumstances. One type of constraint is that solutions to different fairness issues or their effects on different groups may be in conflict. (Contains 70 figures, 26 tables, and numerous references.) (SLD)

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